

## THE FRENCH ADMINISTRATION OF INDO-CHINA

vinced were they and the Metropole of the gulf between them, that a totally different administration was evolved for the two countries. At one time France even contemplated sacrificing Annam to keep Tonkin. But this project was nipped in the bud by the realization that some foreign Power could drive a wedge between the two French colonies of the peninsula, and that an independent Hue would always stir up trouble in Tonkin. For many years this initial error kept the French from appreciating the cultural unity of the three Annamite countries, and they tried by different administrative methods to sunder what history had knit together throughout twenty centuries of common editions.

In the new-born Protectorate of Annam-Tonkin, it was soon obvious that the storm centre would be Hue. Tu-Duc died in July 1883, but the course of the Protectorate ran no smoother for the death of its most implacable enemy. His demise, rather, opened the way to the mandarin-Scholar party, who, thanks to a series of ephemeral emperors, were soon able to dominate the situation. The Bac-Le episode was to his group the joyous confirmation of French impotence, so they proceeded to crown and depose monarchs without even consulting the French Resident Consul. Finally a French battalion had to be called in to reduce the Scholar party to a humbler state of mind. It was hoped that this advantage would be permanently confirmed by the stationing of French troops in the Hue citadel.

Temporarily thwarted at the capital, the Scholars turned their activities to the provinces. There their venom was exercised principally upon the native Christians, for, said they picturesquely, without

hem the French would be like crabs without claws. Throughout

883-84 only the vigilance of the French kept these reprisals from materializing. The situation was still fundamentally the same when jeneral de Courcy took over the command, in June 1885.

De Courcy's incompetence and foolhardy behaviour precipitated

Scholars\* long-maturing plans for a general massacre of the French ad of their Christian supporters. This attack failed, but due to no aresight on the part of De Courcy. The Regent Thuyet fled to the mountains, taking with him the twelve-year-old Emperor, Ham NghL ince the Protectorate needed a sovereign to protect, the French at nee cast about for some harmless substitute. Their choice finally feE n Dong Khanh, brother to the Emperor-in-flight. The Comat was ext reconstituted with more obliging Ministers. Popular resentment f this policy was shown by the outbreak of a general revolt, whicfc